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ABSTRACT

This report briefly describes child care facilities and policies in Sweden, Israel, and France. The report represents the impressions of 24 labor union women who visited these countries in an attempt to formulate a policy for government supported comprehensive child care in the United States. The labor union representatives were participants in a Child Care Seminar sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). The descriptions of programs in each country include such information as general policies, types of programs, the effect of increasing numbers of women in the work force, and the development of national child care policies. The descriptions also include the participants' impressions of the overall child care model in each country. The final section of the booklet presents the conclusions of the participants and some of the implications of the visits for child care advocacy in the United States. (BD)

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A Commitment to Children

The report of the Coalition of Labor Union Women Child Care Seminar, sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, 1977.

Prepared by Ruth Jordan.

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Child Care Seminar
Mildred Jeffrey
Coordinator

Dear Friend:

This report represents the reflections and impressions of the participants in the Child Care Seminar of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) after visits to Israel, Sweden and France under a grant from the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

The twenty-four women who participated in this survey are a cross section of CLUW, representing manufacturing, professional, technical and clerical workers as well as employees in the retail trades and hospitals. They proved themselves to be keen observers, articulate and intelligent representatives of our organization and their individual unions during the trip.

Joyce Miller, Vice President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, was the leader of the Seminar. At the trip's conclusion, she commented: "We found in every nation we visited that child care is regarded as a means to strengthen the family and to ease the burden of the individual responsibility of parents."

We hope that readers of this report will find it useful as they discuss the urgent need for pre-school and child care programs in our country. Certainly the report has reenforced the determination of CLUW to campaign for national child care legislation and a national policy on family life.

We wish to express our deep appreciation to the many hosts and hostesses who planned the Seminar itinerary in each country and who gave so generously of their time to make the Seminar experience rewarding and exciting.

more ...

In France, we owe a special note of thanks to the representative of the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. and to the Ministry of Education as well as to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Ministry of Health and to the officials of Syndicat National des Instituteurs (teachers union), Force Ouvriere and the Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail.

We are particularly appreciative in Israel to Na'amat, the Salaried Women's Division of Histadrut and to the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Labor, who gave enthusiastically of their time to make our visit in their country so productive.

We are grateful to the Swedish Institute, the Labor Market Board, The Commission on Equality between Men and Women as well as to the members of the Swedish Parliament and the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) who spent many hours with the Seminar explaining Sweden's system of child care.

We also wish to thank the International Metalworkers' Federation for their splendid staff assistance and wise counselling.

We extend special thanks to the participating unions and to their officers for their support of the CLUW Seminar and for their continuing interest in child care.

Lastly, our appreciation to Mildred Jeffrey who prepared the grant proposal and coordinated all the arrangements for the Seminar.

And to the CLUW participants who projected such a sense of unity and solidarity to those they met around the world, I am both proud and grateful.

Olga M. Madar

Olga M. Madar,
President

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The Child Care Seminar was sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women under a grant by the German Marshall Fund of the United States. 1977.

EACH CHILD A TREASURE

"We have so few children in our nation. . . . you have so many . . . to us, each child is a treasure."

Nursery School Teacher in Sweden

* * *

In the United States we consider that our children are the sole responsibility of their parents. They are the individual family's joy or sorrow. Their achievements are family medals, their defeats are to be endured.

The fact is that while the family bears the most difficult burden, the entire community pays the costs of the illnesses, the failures and the defeats in lost productivity, lost talent and lost revenues.

Similarly the community reaps the benefits from the child's successes and triumphs. A successful child is one that will enrich the nation with its productive work, scientific discoveries, academic and artistic achievements and financial contributions.

In Israel, Sweden and France, where the members of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) Child Care Seminar visited and held discussions with officials and ordinary citizens involved in child care work, it was clear that the national community assumed as much responsibility for the child's success as did the family.

The underlying social philosophy was that the family's health bore directly on the child's well-being and the community could affect the health of the family through its social programs.

This was in marked contrast to the dominant view in the United States that the nation is a collection of individuals each of whom bears the major responsibility for his or her offspring and that furthermore, the community must only intervene after a crisis develops.

The trade union women who participated in this study did so knowing the pressing child care needs of their own members.

They also understood that every industrialized nation was dealing with the demands of a growing female workforce and changing patterns of family life.

Their discussions and observations covered several areas. Their first concern was the children in the centers and schools they visited -- how did they look, what were the facilities like, what kind of program was being carried on, who were the adults trained, who paid for the program, who supervised the facility?

They examined the historical development of the programs and their relationship to national programs and policy. They looked at the number of women now active in the labor market and the impact of unions and women's groups on child care policy.

In each nation they found governments recognize the right of women to participate in the labor market on an equal basis with men and are taking positive steps to make it possible for women who wish to work, to enter and remain in the workforce.

They also found that despite these efforts, as in the United States, women were still found in traditional jobs: clerical, sales, beauty salons, hotel, restaurant, textiles, clothing, health caring. They

also noted that the wage gap between male and female earnings is substantial. Women and their unions suffer the same frustration as in the U.S. that legislation to provide for equal pay for equal work has not been successful.

In each nation there was a conscious policy to relate child care programs to other family social services and to use the child care program as a point to reach parents and identify families in need of special help. Child care was not viewed as a separate social program but as a vital part of broader national policy dealing with education, the labor market, integration of immigrant workers and income stabilization and overall quality of life.

The CLUW Child Care Seminar found professionals everywhere examining their programs in light of research that indicates the child's earliest experiences, from birth to three, are influential in molding personality and intelligence. As a result, the content of programs for infants and very young children has been expanded in each country to include a strong educational and developmental component.

The Swedish government is committed by law, and its powerful unions are committed by convention decision, to bring about equality between men and women. Comprehensive child care is viewed as the major solution to bringing women into the workforce so they can play a more significant role in the economic life of the country. Explicit national policy states that every child has the right to a pre-school education and stresses the value of early educational and socializing experiences.

A Swedish governmental commission has set a ten year goal to expand the day care facilities while maintaining the high quality of services, child/adult ratios of 5:2 for children under age 3 and 5:1 for children age 3 to 7,* informal atmosphere and excellent equipment and play materials. Comprehensive child care programs in Sweden are also the focal point of a program to integrate socially, mentally and physically handicapped children into the broader school community.

Israel's changing population is a major factor in its programs. This nation is made up of more than 55 percent Oriental Jewish families (Jews emigrating from Moslem and Asiatic countries). The government sees child care as a way to integrate these immigrants into the mainstream of Israeli life. Child care programs are the core element of new community centers. The centers, staffed by social workers and other personnel, provide integrated services to families attracted there by the child care program. The extension of services to after-school programs and recreational programs is meant to relieve the over-burdened mother of large families. The child care programs of Israel release the mother so that she may have time to learn more about her new country. They draw her into the community so that she will not be isolated from her own family as they make their transition to modern Israeli life. The programs also serve the working mother and are the key element in attracting more women to enter the labor force.

The French program is similarly an expression of broader national concerns. Early child care started in 1887 for poor children and was aimed at stopping the spread of contagious disease. The infant creches and ecole maternelle that make up today's system still have a strong health service orientation. The creches, in particular, are staffed by baby nurses and provide services for infants from one month to three years. The neighborhood creche is aware of the baby from the day he or she is born since the system is related to the infant/maternal care system. France's family policy includes subsidies to parents for each child that is born and various allowances for infant and school expenses. The subsidy depends on the child appearing for its appointments with the local health care station.

The ecole maternelle is part of the free public school system. It serves children from age two until they enter elementary school at age six and provides an early education as well as child care. The community supplements the school schedule with

*Child care ratios vary according to the age of the child – it seemed to range from 1:1 to 5:2, but because children are increasingly found in mixed age groupings, it was difficult to determine simply from observation.

caretakers hired to supervise recreation and homework after regular school hours.

The French government contends it is neutral on the question of bringing more women into the labor force. But as a result of strong pressures from the trade union movement, child care has become very much a part of labor market policy.

CLUW observers summarized the observations at the conclusion of the seminar with some of the following points:

1.) The CLUW Child Care Seminar was impressed with the fact that child care, in all countries, is regarded as a social responsibility rather than an individual responsibility;

2.) All countries are striving to provide universal quality of child care services for all children regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin or economic status. At this time priorities are given to working mothers, single parents, and to families of children with special needs. Such services are free or based on ability to pay;

3.) In all countries child care is part of a broad national family policy providing comprehensive benefits and services for both family and children;

4.) In all three countries unions are playing a major role in urging their respective governments to increase the availability of child care for all women, but most especially for working women;*

5.) The number and diversity of alternative plans and programs for meeting the needs of children was impressive. The programs ranged from baby sitter care which provided a safe place to high quality programs providing a full range of educational and social experiences;

6.) Special consideration is given to emotionally and physically handicapped youngsters in each country;

7.) There is strong evidence of programs designed to respect the child's home language, as well as cultural and ethnic differences of a diverse population;

8.) In all three countries government participates in the funding of child care services, with little child care for profit;

9.) Despite a strong committment and effort in each country to provide sufficient facilities, the demand for child care has exceeded the supply of space and trained personnel. Everywhere efforts are underway to deal with the problem.

*In the United States, the union that has pioneered in this area is the Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union which provides child care for over 1,300 children, the largest single provider of private, non-profit day care services in this country.

SWEDEN

CLUW Delegate: "Who supervises your activities?"
Day Care Teacher: "I don't understand . . ."
CLUW Delegate: "To whom are you responsible?"
Day Care Teacher: "To the children, of course!"

* * *

It took nearly the entire week in Sweden for the members of the Child Care Seminar to sort out the responses we were getting from people and learn to ask the right questions. When we figured it out it became clear that our questions proceeded from a different premise. Our questions flowed from the structure of decision making in the United States and things were very different in Sweden.

We frequently asked: "How do you make people carry out these policies?" or "Who forces the municipal politicians to implement national goals?" We were told, "Oh, they will do it because the country is moving toward that goal," or "They will do it because that is what we have decided."

We brought our political lifestyle with us – basically an adversary procedure with a winner and a loser every step of the way. The Swedes were responding from their historic perspective of shared decision making and shared responsibility.

This cooperative mood or climate is built into the structure of government. Sweden does not have a highly centralized government bureaucracy. The bulk of its civil service is in the municipalities – a system of some 278 governmental bodies reduced from several thousand in recent years.

Annika Baude of the Ministry of Social Welfare described the role of the municipalities as being primarily to run the schools, old age care, welfare and child care: "Particularly the children . . . the municipalities must be aware of their conditions and that they have what they need for growing up."

The municipalities can tax income and determine community priorities and expenditures based on extensive discussion in the communities.

A nationwide discussion was being conducted, for example, on the new national pre-school law. We saw colorful graphics and books which were available to the municipalities. They covered the history of child care programs in Sweden, new directions in educational philosophy and the national effort to build more day care centers and pre-schools while reaching out to more children, especially the handicapped.

This kind of public education program is developed by the National Board of Health and Welfare. The books and posters are purchased by the municipality, the message is debated and discussed in union meetings, school meetings, political party meetings and community discussion "circles."

The municipal politicians, who are seated based on the proportional strength of their parties, present a proposal for day care to the community. Various organizations comment on it and it is then submitted to the appropriate Ministry to make sure it meets requirements for space and equipment as regulated by the state. After approval the municipality is entitled to a payment (14,000 Swedish Krona) for every child care space it creates.

In short, Swedish social welfare is a community concern. Sweden cares for the young and the aged; the worker and the immigrant. It provides programs for the many, but also programs that help the few. Swedes are expected to pay for the cost of these programs and they do. We heard many complaints about taxes (our guide told us Swedes call the income tax building their "wailing wall") but we didn't hear any complaints about the services provided except that there were not enough. "No one would dare touch our child care system," said the Teacher-Director of a program for handicapped children in Taby. "We always complain, but taxes we pay."

ORGANIZATION OF CHILD CARE

Out-of-home care in Sweden began in the middle of the 19th century as charitable institutions for the children of poor working mothers. By the 20th century the kindergarten movement promoted the value of early educational experiences for pre-school children and was particularly popular among the middle class. A 1936 Government Commission on Child Care recommended pre-school for all children from the age of three as a "necessary complement" to their home life.

Increases in the female workforce during World War II led to the establishment of government supported day nurseries under the National Board of Health and Welfare.

There was a decline in the growth of community day care facilities during the fifties when institutional care fell into disrepute and there was a decrease in female labor market participation. As a result only 2,000 additional places were built during the fifteen year period between 1950 and 1965.

This decline in construction changed significantly during the 1960's when the rate of female participation began its upward climb. In 1950, 34 percent of all women were working; by 1965, 38 percent of all women were working; but by 1970, over 50 percent of all women were working. The figure for employment of women with small children has also climbed. Swedish statistics show that in 1965, 35 percent of women with children under 7 were working outside the home, while by 1974 that figure had risen to 57 percent. The increase represents the largest percentage increase of any group of women in the population. More than half of the working women still work part time.

Spaces in day care centers did not keep pace. Since 1965 there has been an increase in day nursery places from about 12,000 to 65,000, but all Swedish authorities agree that there must be more.

A Governmental Commission on Child Care established in 1968 studied all forms of child care facilities in Sweden and issued their report in 1975. The report led to passage of the Swedish Pre-School Act which requires the municipalities to establish pre-school programs for children six years old and younger. Pre-schools, which include day care centers, operate under a single administration which combines social welfare and educational specialists.

The Act also required the municipalities to offer this pre-school to handicapped children and those with special language needs at a younger age. Children of immigrants or political refugees living in Sweden are entitled to receive instruction in their home language by a home language teacher.

The Governmental Commission called on the municipalities to create 100,000 more pre-school spaces in five years, but costs of construction and shortages of staff have political and social experts admitting that the goal will not be met.

There are currently 70,000 children in pre-school centers and another 70,000 in municipally regulated private homes called "Family Day Care." The Swedish Labor Market Board reports that there are some 350,000 children under seven years of age of working parents. That means approximately one out of every three children is unable to find a place.* However, coverage is much more extensive for children age 3 and older.

The current child care debate in Sweden centers around the creation of pre-school places and the

*Berit Rollin, Economist, Swedish Labor Market Board, in a long briefing session with the Child Care Seminar.

speed at which the municipalities will meet this goal.

The Governmental Commission on Pre-Schools, which issued an unanimous report, was headed by Social Democratic Member of Parliament Mats Helstrom. Helstrom met with the CLUW Seminar members and told us that, "Child care centers are not a stopgap."

"They are the tools," he said, "to fill the labor market, expand the education of children and move toward equality of women in the general society."

The Commission which Helstrom headed was opposed to the speed of family day care that municipalities had provided to meet the child care needs of their populations. The Commission advocated child care for everyone who wanted it and called for 90 percent of that care in pre-schools and no more than 10 percent in family day care.

Family day care proponents point out that it employs women in their homes, provides space without capital outlays for construction costs and can be provided almost immediately.

Trade unionists in Sweden are concerned that the pragmatism of the new government on this question will cause it to emphasize family day care in order to avoid the cost of group [illegible] and cut down on female unemployment. A recent report filed by the municipalities with the National Board of Health and Welfare shows that concern is legitimate. The municipalities report they are immediately planning 25 percent fewer places in child care than they projected in the previous year. One factor is the possibility that mothers will receive cash allowances to stay home.*

Notwithstanding the tugs and pulls of current economics and political problems, Swedish parents seem to prefer group day care and the municipalities are committed to increasing the number of spaces and variety of care provided. At the close of a recent conference of municipal officials the municipalities pledged to build the required spaces by 1980 so that every child who wanted a space could find one.

*See "Relating Family Policy to Labor Market Policy."

MANY OPTIONS

Swedish parents have access to a wide variety of care. The all-day care center gives priority to working parents and parents who are students. These centers are particularly noteworthy for their homelike atmosphere and openness. Parents can leave children at the center and pick them up on a flexible schedule. Fees are low and income related.

Municipally run nursery schools, staffed by nursery school teachers, are open to all six year olds and most five year olds. If vacancies occur the children are admitted at a younger age. Handicapped children also receive a priority and are admitted at a younger age.

The nursery school classes are divided into morning and afternoon sessions. There is no fee to the parent. Parent meetings are held each month and parents are expected to participate in school activities with their children at least once each month.

Both the nursery schools and the day care child centers are administered by the local authorities charged with child care matters and responsible to the National Board of Health and Welfare. Both are called pre-school. The principal is to merge the lines so as to obliterate distinctions between economic groups.

Parents may combine pre-school at a local nursery with home care at a registered family day care home, either out of need or preference.

Family day care and the child care center are paid for by a combination of state supports, municipal payments and sliding scale payments based on the income of the parents, the number of children in the family, how many use the child care facility and the number of days it is used.

To find a space in any of these facilities, the parent begins with a visit to the local Social Welfare office or Child Care Center. The Social Welfare offices are located in shopping centers or centrally situated community facilities. The offices provide a wide range of information about housing, medical

care, old age benefits, recreational facilities and child care programs.

Nearby drop-in child care programs are operated as children's play centers where trained personnel play games with the children or provide supplies for arts and crafts activities. These services are available for short term periods at low cost.

A complete system of public parks provides supervised recreational facilities for children from pre-schoolers to teenagers. These facilities generally hold the parent responsible for the children, rather than the community, but are used as alternate care facilities for older school age children. They provide for games, casual play and more studied developmental activities such as in the 12 children's theatres located in Stockholm parks.

Children attending school continue to have access to child care through a system of free time centers. These are opened in the morning before school and usually provide breakfast. The children return to the free time center after school until they are picked up by their parents or an older sibling as late as 6 p.m. Children, ages 7-9, are enrolled in these centers at the beginning of each school semester. If they fail to show up at the center, their parents are notified. The centers provide places for children to do homework as well as access to libraries, music classes, sewing and carpentry.

Fees for the free time centers are shared by the state, municipal governments and parents based on a sliding scale similar to that used in determining day care center fees.

Also of interest is a series of free time activities being developed for children between 7 and 12 years of age, particularly in remote areas near the Arctic Circle or in northern rural communities. The programs provide enrichment experiences as well as after-school care. They include recreational games and creative drama and are financed in part by contributions from the State Inheritance Fund, which is built by the estates of persons who die without wills. This money is used by voluntary organizations such as the Scouts as well as government bureaus concerned with child welfare.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Family day care has grown quickly in Sweden despite the parliamentary goal to keep it at no more than 10 percent of the number of publicly supported child care spaces in any community. The reason is of course directly related to the phenomenal growth of women workers.

Family day caretakers are regulated by the municipality's Health and Social Welfare Board. The caretaker may not take in more than four children in addition to her own child. Parents pay a percentage of the cost of care to the municipality, the municipality in turn pays the caretaker directly. The state subsidizes 35 percent of the cost of this care.

A municipal supervisor visits the mother (fathers are permitted to work as day caretakers, but women predominate) and helps her carry on her job. She is offered a 90 hour child development and training course, but the course is not required and only 30% take it.

The day caretaker has access to toy libraries as well as other materials and a central place in most communities to where she can go and join other mothers who are taking care of children.

In order to maintain the rate of construction of community day care facilities, the state usually does not approve more spaces in family day care than exist in community care facilities. The pressing demand has led to some unlicensed family day care homes, but more frequently, officials told us, to informal arrangements with young girls, grandmothers and aunts as well as shift work by parents to alternate the times they are at home.

Nursery school teachers told CLUW participants: "Most parents are preferring day care centers over home care..." A national study on the question showed little difference in the results of development tests between children in community care and family care but did comment that the caretakers were different, "less allowing, more conservative" than community day workers. Children stayed longer hours in family day care homes than in centers and changed caretakers with

considerable frequency.*

HELP FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Of particular note is the Swedish Lekotek, a pilot program to train and teach parents of handicapped children how to work with their youngsters.

The Lekotek we visited in Taby, a working class and immigrant community, provides a variety of services. The teacher-director and her small staff work directly with a small number of children and their parents who are referred by a pediatrician after the birth of the child. The younger the defect is detected, the earlier the Lekotek workers will begin the job.

The parent and the child come together to the center and play with specially designed toys that will stimulate the child's perceptions. The program is designed to build the child's strengths while offering support and guidance to the parent.

Beyond the small number of children who actually come to the center, the teacher-director and the staff pay calls to parents of other handicapped children, offering them the same kind of instruction in the home and lending toys for the children to play with.

There is close communication between the Lekotek and the other social and health services personnel in the community.

Community day care centers or nursery schools which have enrolled a handicapped child may call on the Lekotek for specialized services to help initiate staff training, recommend special equipment or determine if the number of staff or amount of space in the facility is ample to care for the handicapped child's special needs.

NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TRAINING

The question of standards of equipment, materials, teachers and staff were uppermost in the minds of CLUW participants who frequently asked, "Are all day care centers like this?"; "Are you showing us centers that are typical of the city?"*

Requirements for equipment, space per child, and types of play areas both indoors and out are standard and regulations are spelled out by the state in order for the municipalities to qualify for the state grant.

We heard some complaints in fact, that parents who attempted to set up cooperative day care to meet their needs until a community care facility could be built were stymied by all the rules and regulations. A move by the National Health and Welfare Board to relax those standards for such ventures was being considered. We did not find any day care for profit being built or encouraged.

The standard concerning teacher-child ratio was described as 3:5 for 6 months to 3 years old and 1:5 for 3 to 7 years. One day care worker told us that his profession would never agree to reducing that ratio in order to accommodate more children. "It is not only an educational issue," he told us, "it is a trade union issue."

Mats Helstrom, Chairperson of the National Commission on Pre-Schools, ascribed differences in day care centers around Sweden to "cultural" preferences. Another report* ascribed the differences to economics. In poorer areas with more

*Soderlund, ibid.

*While the Seminar was in Stockholm, the Day Care Workers coincidentally held their annual Congress. In an interview with one recent immigrant from the United States who now heads a child care teachers local in Lund, we were told that the child care equipment and space allotment were almost identical throughout Sweden. This teacher had taken student teaching at centers in almost every region of Sweden. He commented that one Center we visited in Stockholm which we found particularly impressive, was actually considered deprived because it didn't meet current standards on playground areas.

*Soderlund, ibid.

immigrants, the writer noted, many children will be in centers staffed by less well-trained workers. In middle-class or working-class centers in and around big cities, there will be more centers than in rural areas and the staff will be better trained.

Just as there is a shortage of day care spaces, there is a shortage of trained day care workers. Currently day care teachers and baby nurses are both hired to work in the centers. Only certified kindergarten teachers may teach in municipal pre-schools.

The training for day care teachers begins after a student concludes compulsory education at age 16. The student might go on to a gymnasium for additional general education or might select a particular "line" of study at a special school. Elementary school teachers would attend a school that is connected to a particular education faculty at a university. Day care and nursery school teachers would attend a pre-school teachers' seminar taught by college level instructors. There are 16 of these colleges teaching the Swedish language, hygiene, child development, educational philosophy and methods of activating small children.

The program is based on a "team" concept and concentrates on the development of the child. A number of students advance as a group through the courses. The American immigrant day care teacher called it the "most extraordinary educational experience" of his life.

There is a particular incentive in the new course of studies to attract men to formerly all-female occupations. As a result we saw a number of young men working in the day care programs and the leisure time centers.

In centers which cannot attract certified nursery school teachers the staff is made up of baby nurses, although a combination of these two kinds of workers is more likely.

The day care teachers told us their union is attempting to encourage the baby nurses with whom they work to upgrade their occupation by taking the special course, but we did not determine how successful this effort has been.

The baby nurse also completes secondary school but may have taken a special child care series of courses before graduating and then additional practice training or may take special university level courses.

Both groups have practical experience as student teachers or student baby nurses before working on their own. All employees in the day care center – including maintenance workers, cooks and cleaners, are considered part of the child care team and are exposed to various forms of ongoing staff training. This is true for staff at a nursery school or a child care center.

WHAT WE SAW

A child care center in Sweden, a free time program or a nursery school, all bear a strong similarity in that the program is stimulated by the child rather than the teacher.

In the centers we saw very little effort aimed at instructing the child. "We do not concentrate on subject matter," one Social Welfare administrator told us, "we concentrate on helping the child develop as a human being."

Craft materials and toys are there in ample numbers and the teachers seem to be assisting the child in the activity rather than directing them.

There was very low key and gentle contact between the children and the teachers. Frequently teachers were seen sitting quietly on a couch reading to a child. The eating situations were very much like a family home. Little babies in high chairs seated next to a baby nurse at a regular family sized table, with everyone lunching together.

There were places for children to carpenter and cook and projects seemed to be planned around these tools.

The municipal pre-school we visited was for 6 year olds and had a stronger education program. The children had completed a study of ships and other forms of transportation. They had designed a group mural on Africa which was startlingly beautiful for its color and free imagination.

A game which the teacher described to us gives some insight into their interests and word

perception. A child might ask to play a game about textures. "Find me something in wood . . . not of processed wood but of real wood . . . find me something in textile . . . not of synthetics but of linen . . ."

Most notable about the Swedish program was the homelike atmosphere of the community care centers we visited. They were like no other institution or school we had ever seen. Divided into individual rooms, there were places for children to swing on strong equipment suspended from the ceiling; rooms with subdued lighting so that children could hide behind pillows and rugs; rooms to eat in and read in; rooms to play games and work with tools and craft materials. There were rooms for wet play and a balcony for winter outdoor play for little children. There was also access to outdoor play areas year around.

At one leisure time center the staff member groped for English words to answer the question we asked and a young girl who was playing around his legs chimed in and answered the question with great naturalness and poise. He was completely unconcerned with her presence, took her interruption with good grace and accepted her information with thanks.

Faculty have a special room in the centers with chairs and eating tables that give them an opportunity to separate from the children.

There is an easy access to food in the form of fruit or cheese and crackers on the table and coffee percolating on the stove, all of which emphasized the homelike atmosphere of the centers.

The decorations rely on use of the colorful Scandinavian fabrics, much of which is in bright primary colors. There is a sense that this place was built for its present use although, in fact, the places we visited were often reconstructed from former apartment houses or dwellings and were not originally centers. But it was obvious that a great investment had been made to make them work in that way.

RELATING FAMILY POLICY TO LABOR MARKET POLICY

Sweden's family policy and its labor market policy are interrelated through a series of programs that serve both the interest of preserving family life and providing jobs for everyone.

The Swedes changed the name of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Commission on Issues of Equality between Men and Women. This Parliamentary Commission has noted that women will gain equality when they can share the rights and responsibilities of men. That means encouraging women to enter the labor market in order to take part in the economic decisions that are made there. It also means providing encouragement to men to take on their share of family and household responsibilities.

Sweden's maternity leave, for example, has been renamed Parental Leave. It provides through the national insurance system up to 90 percent pay for either parent for a period of nine months after the child is born if both parents are employed. Parents who wish to work a shorter day can extend this period for up to 14 months.

When the parental leave feature was first introduced in 1974 the Swedes discovered mothers were still taking the bulk of the leave but the percentage of fathers using the benefit has increased with each year.

Both parental leave and the debate over the shorter work day as opposed to the shorter work week are related to a concern that there be "more time for children."

Parents argue that a shorter work day will give them an opportunity to spend longer periods of time with their children as well as provide more jobs in the economy. A shorter work week, on the other hand, may simply encourage long weekends in the country and will not change the relationships within the family or provide opportunity for greater participation in community and political life.

The strong political link between child care and labor market policy, as well as questions of equality between men and women, have been highlighted by a proposal by the new government that parents get paid for staying home to take care of their children until they are three years old. The Social

Democratic Party feels such a contribution would stop the expansion of the pre-schools and tend to prevent the entry of women into the labor market.

It was notable that although labor policy played so large a part in the philosophy underlying the provision of day care, the centers were available to more than just working parents.

Students with children were considered as working parents in determining priorities in enrollment. Handicapped children below the age of 6 were also given priority, with the proviso that the local nursery school or center take on additional trained teachers to provide necessary special care.

THE SWEDISH MODEL

Swedish officials were quick to warn us that their country of only 8 million people did not face the same problems that our nation did. They pointed out the homogeneity of their population, the long cultural history of cooperation and community based social programs.

They also pointed out that the solidity of their labor movement – more than 90 percent organized – gave particular strength to accomplish social programs.

It was the labor unions and the Swedish Social Democratic Party that were leading the debate over issues raised by child care. It was the labor unions pushing for additional spaces. The ever-growing ranks of women trade unionists and the commitment to female equality put pressure on union leaders to respond to the needs of working women.

Despite these differences there were models in the Swedish system of child care that could be translated to the United States.

We, too, need to provide for the cultural needs of children with a different home language than English. We need bilingual teachers to help children continue speaking their home language and make sure they learn English. The Swedish home language teaching program works with parents, pre-schoolers and school age children to accomplish this goal.

As in the United States, Swedish authority for child care is centered in the immediate community. Broad standards for state support come from a central authority, but enforcement and numbers of spaces are directed by community needs.

Swedish programs to upgrade existing personnel, train and attract male teachers, develop new training methods for early childhood educators, should have an impact on our own schools of education.

Providing a home-like look to the day care centers, experimenting with sibling groups, changing existing recreational department offerings to follow the schedule and program of the leisure time centers, could change the face of existing child care in the U.S.

Finally, just as we can adopt a family policy for our nation, we can develop a labor market policy that, as in Sweden, attempts to give women equal access to jobs by making sure there's a place for their children to grow and develop.

ISRAEL

"In the beginning – 32 years ago – the first thing we thought about was, 'What shall we do for the children?' "

Aliza Tamir, Chairperson
Salaried Workers Division, Histadrut*

* * *

When you visit Israel, you do not have the feeling that you "have seen the future," but you certainly feel you have been moving toward it. Israelis seem always to have their eye on tomorrow and the greatest hope of that tomorrow is their children. The pioneer spirit seems very alive in Israel because of the realities of the frontier – of scarcity, war and unmet needs.

To understand the way Israel provides day care for its children one must first understand something about the way it was settled and its modern history.

Although we talk about Israel as being nearly 30 years old, its recent history goes back to the twenties, when Jewish intellectuals from Europe began to design their Zionist dream and plan for the ingathering of the exiles.

Living under the British mandate or Turkish law, they still had to provide social services for Jewish families as well as design an economic system and build a working class.

The tragedy of the holocaust only intensified these needs and the interim wars with the British and Arabs made the establishment of ordinary governmental services almost impossible.

In a way not unlike the pattern of American immigrant and frontier life, they formed their own self-help organizations and reached out to Jews around the world to assist them. The private organizations became quasi-governmental agencies fulfilling the role of ministries of health, education and social welfare.

Israel's extensive health system, for example, is privately operated and government supported. Histadrut runs the biggest health plan – Kupat Holim. Hadassah operates many of the hospitals. The lack of fine and precise lines between what is public and what is private is a baffling experiences for visitors from the United States.

The United States of course has many such public programs that include contributions from private organizations as sponsors or underwriters as well as private programs underwritten by public funds. But our central government is the agency which sets direction and standards in most areas where public funds are expended. As Israel's nationhood becomes more secure, its citizens are also debating what properly belongs to the state to administer and what should remain in the private domain. We discovered that the question of whether the health system should remain with Histradrut or become part of a state agency was an ongoing issue.

A similar debate is taking place around the child

*Histadrut is the Israeli labor federation.

care system, which derives from this early history and depends substantially on the existence of volunteer organizations.* It also depends on a ready supply of volunteer women prepared to give many unpaid or low-paid hours to the job as an extension of the Israeli pioneer spirit.

THE ORGANIZATION OF CHILD CARE

Na'amat, the division of Histadrut which includes all working women in Israel, including housewives who join Histadrut, is the largest single provider of child care services in Israel. The 700,000 member organization operates 500 day care centers for 15,000 children throughout Israel. The organization also operates training schools for socially disadvantaged girls, after school programs for school age children, vocational training and education, including certificated apprenticeship classes, housewives' clubs, summer camps for mothers and children, old age and recreational programs.

Na'amat's facilites are operated by its volunteers in local chapters throughout Israel and in cooperation with local Labor Councils. The organizations receive space and some staff support from the Labor Council, but each Na'amat local is responsible for fund raising to operate the day care facilities in its area. The 0.8 of one percent which Na'amat receives from the total Histadrut budget is a "new achievement," we were told by Na'amat leaders. Finances, therefore, determine the location of the child care facilities. They are only built where existing Na'amat chapters can handle the burden of fund raising and direction.

Na'amat describes itself as supplying "public services which the various state agencies and departments are yet incapable of assuming." At present government support of day care facilities is shared by the Ministries of Social Welfare, Labor and Education.

The Ministry of Education is opening kindergartens within the system of free public education which provide services for children of five years* and older within a municipality. These programs are directed and taught by teachers certified by the Ministry. The support systems of supplies and construction are provided by the municipalities. Teacher aides are also paid by the municipalities. Kindergarten teachers in community care facilities are paid by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Social Welfare pays a stipend for socially disadvantaged families whose children attend a creche or day care center operated by a private voluntary organization.

The Ministry of Labor provides payment on a sliding scale based on the wages of working mothers for children who are in day care centers.*

*An excellent example of this kind of program is seen in the history of the WIZO child center in Jerusalem which the Seminar visited. The Women's International Zionist Organization is one of several women's organizations which operate children's programs. The Center was established in 1924 by pediatrician Dr. Helena Kagan to provide a home for babies and children abandoned after World War I. Dr Kagan's "closed" institution or residential facility has given way to an extensive program for the children of working mothers including a long day kindergarten and a half day kindergarten for children between 3 and 4. It also provides 16 day creches for 330 children from 3 and 4 months up to 4 years which operate from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. It provides experimental services for after school hours so that older children can do homework and receive a hot lunch. It provides special education programs for girls "from the street" to give them literacy skills, vocational skills and training for potential jobs in WIZO centers throughout Israel. Additionally it provides services for the aged, war widows, women and immigrants. The Center employs paid staff, but this institution which services more than 600 individuals daily is directed by a WIZO volunteer.

*Children are eligible from age 5 but if space is available they may be accepted at age 4 or 3.

*Dr Sheila B. Kamerman, Consultant to the CLUW Child Care Service, reports in her research that 90% of all Israeli children between 3 and 5 attend some sort of pre-school or kindergarten.

The cost of providing care for the approximately 30,000* children in recognized centers is shared by the government and the voluntary organizations. The government through its various ministries provides 60 percent of the cost. The voluntary organizations must provide 40 percent of the monies. Parents pay varying parts of that 40 percent on a sliding scale depending on a pre-determined government schedule.

At a wrap-up session that featured government and women's representatives, the Na'amat leaders complained that the government was really paying less than the 60 percent portion it claimed. An unrealistic formula for determining the cost of maintaining a child in care keeps the government contribution down, we were told, and requires the voluntary organizations to make up the difference.

"We are being crushed by the financial burden," we were told by Na'amat Secretary General Tamar Eshel. She is one who would significantly reduce the role her organization plays in providing day care and shift the burden more substantially to the Israeli government.

The cost of providing day care is also a concern of the Salaried Women's Division of Histadrut. These women are also Na'amat members, but they include only women who work for a wage. Aliza Tamir, Chairperson of the Division, told CLUW there must be other alternatives to providing day care than the centers because of the great capital outlay required for their construction. Tamir, who is a leader of the militant nurses union, was instrumental in having day care facilities set up in hospitals.* Hospital facilities and others established in close proximity or specifically for parents in a particular factory or industrial complex have been built in different parts of Israel in combination with management and the Ministry of Labor.

Tamir told CLUW that although the work connected child care centers were well used, mothers preferred the community based day care centers. The expense of constructing these centers however led the Salaried Women to put pressure on the government to extend the school day or to provide after school programs in existing school structures to at least service the older children. Five years of pressure from the Salaried Women's Division has led to the experimental program of an extended school day which CLUW participants observed in Lod.

Tamir noted that all these programs provided sliding scale payments to the sponsoring organizations from the Ministry of Labor for children of working women. But in communities with insufficient child care spaces or without work-connected centers working women hire private baby sitters. Women workers argue that the Ministry of Labor should provide similar payments for such home care. Although women workers advocated such payments, she assured us, it did not mean they preferred home care to out-of-home care. The educational content and interaction with other children provided by the community based facility were considered vital to the social development of the individual.

"We have seen the results of the Kibbutzim," she told us. "We are not afraid of institutional care for our children."*

During the most recent armed conflicts with the Arabs, Israeli men were called away from their jobs in factories and government agencies went to the front to fight. The surprise nature of the attack

*Ministry of Labor.

*The hospital child care centers are staffed on a round-the-clock basis and are also planned to keep hospital employees' children in the event of a national emergency.

*The Kibbutzim – collective farms – were the ideal system of organization for the early settlers of Israel. It fitted the needs of the community and met the goals of building a socialist and egalitarian society. All resources were mutually owned and created and all income mutually shared. The collective voted on the dispensation of

(footnote continued on next page)

showed how few women were adequately trained to take over these jobs in an emergency. It also demonstrated in this nation, which believes strongly in equality of its citizens, that women were clustered in very few occupations.

The government began to rethink its labor policy and is now actively encouraging women to enter the workforce in non-traditional occupations. "We need all the human power we can get," said Mrs. Zohar Korte of the Ministry of Labor. She told us that approximately 390,000 women or 35 percent of women between 14 and 64 in Israel were working. Some 38 percent of these have children under the age of 3.

The growth in the number of women workers and the need to increase this number is having its impact on the child care system. The agencies – both public and private – have changed the image of day care centers, removing them from poor neighborhoods and placing them in areas that are neither rich nor poor. The hours have been changed to reflect the needs of working parents and the numbers of space have been significantly increased.

The 30,000 children that are currently in care represents a marked increase over the 10,000 that were served only six years ago.

Israeli experts anticipate that Israel's "dedication to mixed planning and organization" may be significantly altered by the increasing number of women workers. The burden of fund raising and volunteer supervisions will become more and more impossible for the organizations as their most competent leaders enter the labor force and themselves put demands on the government for child care services.

Another new development directly tied to the increase in the number of working mothers is the extended school day which has become an important political issue in Israel.

Children attend school six days a week which corresponds to their parent's workweek. But the hours of school and work are considerably different. School ends at noon or one in the afternoon, work does not end until four or five pm. The Child Care Seminar visited the experimental extended school day program in Lod, an immigrant center. The program is administered by Dr Blanka Bunz, Deputy Director of the Israeli Ministry of Education. She described the program being tested at schools throughout Israel as providing enrichment courses including physical education, art, home arts, manual education, music and help with homework.

A preliminary survey of the experiment has shown that some adjustments will be needed for teachers who travel some distance to their work, but that parents and teachers generally support the programs and will urge its extension.

Where there is no extended day program parents must arrange for a combination of public and private care – school or kindergarten for part of the day and baby sitting by a student or another woman for the rest of the day.

But union women told us the day care centers were the preferred supplement even for school age children. We did not observe the growth of any day care for profit in Israel, despite the need for more spaces. There was, instead, strong pressure on both the state and municipal authorities to extend the existing programs and strengthen them.

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goods and on the policies of the Kibbutz. The children of the Kibbutz were its collective resource and its collective responsibility. Security, as well as principle, determined that children would sleep away from their families in a children's house.
Although only four percent of modern-day Israelis live on Kibbutzim, it remains the ideal. We frequently heard union and government officials say wistfully: "I should have stayed on the Kibbutz," or, "Life was better on the Kibbutz." The faith in collective child rearing and the dependence on voluntary organizations still dominates and dictates the organization of child care in Israel. Interestingly enough, some of the Kibbutzim have modified their [illegible] for very young children because of the fragility of family life due to war time fatalities. Most children now sleep at home with their parents.

STAFF TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION

Several times in our orientation sessions we were told that the Israeli government had been greatly influenced by American research that indicated the child's earliest experiences from one to three determined its future intellectual and social development.

In Israel this has been taken to mean that the educational level of the various programs must be made more intensive and must be extended to younger and younger children. This becomes particularly important in terms of changing the traditional attitudes of the Oriental Jewish families toward education and the role of women.

All three ministries are concerned with this question from their own particular point of view and have developed programs to assist in the integration of these families.

The Ministry of Social Welfare sponsors a Community Center program whose child care component was developed by a U.S. trained social worker, Ms. Margot Fins. The centers began in 1976 in cooperation with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and are an extension of the social service philosophy that stresses rehabilitation rather than "first aid" relief for families in distress.

The centers are aimed at children in poverty level homes in city neighborhoods and frontier settlements. The provide welfare services and family enrichment programs in the same way as do the voluntary women's organizations. The Community Centers are Established in areas where women volunteers may not be available and are staffed by social workers and teachers who can fulfill a variety of functions.

The heavy emphasis on professional training in these centers is significantly different from the history of recruiting personnel for those run by voluntary organizations.

The Community Center program stresses trained staff. A recently initiated one year post BA program is required for all Directors of Day Care programs and staff at the centers. The program has been funded by UNICEF in cooperation with Hebrew University.

WIZO and Na'amat recruit women from many walks of life with a variety of educational backgrounds. Some may have advanced degrees in child development and related studies, others may have had some minimal baby care training. The organizations each set up their own standards for in-service training. They work closely with professionals in various fields including instructors and professors at Israel's leading universities. In-service training is required of all staff that comes in contact with the children, but the nature of the training is not regulated by the Ministries of Health, Education or Labor and the content of the programs is not standardized.

It was clear we were trodding in a sensitive area when we asked questions about staff development, standards of licensing and content of staff training programs. One day care director who would not categorize her staff according to their training and praised them all for their experience and devotion, turned out to be the holder of several advanced degrees in early childhood education, a fact she did not reveal to us during the conversation.

The voluntary organizations feel their workers have done an outstanding job and that their years of experience and on-the-job training more than qualifies them as experts in the field of child care. Yet they recognize the need for more extensive and uniform training programs.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Social Welfare cannot demand standardized training and professional skills unless it is prepared to pay professional wages. It also must acknowledge the fact that these agencies have served the nation well and the women who have staffed these institutions have been loving and devoted caretakers of the children of Israel. One other problem in upgrading the wages and status of child care workers who are not certified teachers is that the teachers union will not take them in their ranks and therefore does not negotiate wages for them. Both professionals and volunteer workers in child care told us they consider the development of a "joint authority" essential to effectively administer the various

programs and develop a unified staff training effort.

THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Child care and family policy questions have provided Israel with a number of difficult conflicts. The system can best be described as pragmatic, Israelis say, "pluralistic." The Israelis accept the fact that the government's defense budget drains its revenues. They know they must depend on raising capital from outside the country to maintain a certain standard of services. They have welcomed Jews from all over the world to their nation and encourage families to have children by paying a substantial and ever increasing family allowance for each child from birth to age 18. Yet these large families — called "blessed" and socially disadvantaged at the same time — are the center of the nation's social welfare problem.

The need to integrate the more than 50 percent of the population which now comes from Moslem countries has put an enormous burden on both the private agencies and public ministries.

The integration of these families is considerably different than those who emigrated from Europe and the United States. The women in these families have been raised in the model of the Arab world. The men have been raised to look on manual labor as degrading; heads of families therefore cannot easily find work. The women are isolated from the modern community, their children are poorly educated, and education in general is not thought of as being particularly beneficial. The child care programs of Israel are aimed at reaching out to these families and bringing them into the mainstream of Israeli life.

Families are reached through their children. A mother is invited to participate in the day care center as a volunteer. She may take classes while she does her laundry in a club owned and operated by the local Na'amat organization and located in the same building as the child care center. She may come first for the laundry or first for the child care, but either way Na'amat volunteers will reach out to her.

A father may be asked to build something for the nursery school or join his wife in a social evening, a language class or vocational program.

Teenagers are encouraged to take part in after school programs where they can receive help with their homework, help their parents are unable to give them.

The Ministry of Social Welfare uses the volunteers at child care centers to provide information about the "modern bureaucracy" and explain what social services are available and how to get them.

Na'amat's Culture and Education Department, while aimed primarily at working women, tries to reach young women who cannot work by providing them with family raising skills, courses in culture, life style, sex education, child health, citizenship and community involvement. The volunteer network of Israel then recruits women who have gone through these courses to work as volunteers among socially deprived families.

Na'amat and WIZO both count their successes in the number of women who complete these programs and take jobs outside the home, some as paid staff in community centers. Although there was some question raised by women's rights advocates about the advisability of encouraging women to leave their homes to take low paying jobs, the overwhelming view was that any job outside the home was a step forward in integrating women into the life of the nation.

Knesset member Ora Namir, who also served as Chairperson of the Israeli Commission on the Status of Women, disagreed when she addressed the Child Care Seminar. She commented on the role of education in the lifestyle of Israeli women, stating the Commission had found that as the level of education rose, men and women competed almost equally in the job market. As the level of education fell, women didn't even enter the job market. Namir felt it would do no good to integrate poorly educated women into the labor market because they would continue to work at the lowest paid jobs

with the least possibility for advancement or change in their basic standard of living.*

of women into the labor force as directly linked to the integration of Oriental families.

In addition to the child care and female oriented classes already mentioned, additional social services are provided by the voluntary organizations and supplemented by the state to help bring mothers of large families out of their isolation and eventually give them enough confidence to work.

Mothers with four or more children are entitled to attend a summer camp away from home. The volunteer organizations provide helpers who prepare food in advance of the mother's leaving and provide alternate care for even very young children so that the mother can go away. For many of these women it is the first time they have been by themselves. The same kind of camp is provided for Arab women in the occupied territories on the Western Bank and is having a powerful influence there.

While Israeli officials say they have still to conquer ancient attitudes toward education and the role of women, the state has successfully intervened in the health and housing standards of recent immigrants.

An important component of Israel's family policy is the nationalized Tipat Halav (a drop of milk in Hebrew). These infant and maternal care stations reach into the most remote areas of the state. Beginning with pre-natal care, the mother received medical attention, instruction on infant care and learns what to expect from the developing baby once it is born. Trained nurses attend her throughout her pregnancy and post-natal period. Babies are born in hospitals and deliveries are attended by physicians. This kind of care has substantially changed the infant mortality rate in the region. Israeli Arab women told us that the infant mortality rate among Arab children had fallen from 60 per thousand in 1948 to 28 per thousand today. Mrs Ana'am Zua'bi, a Na'amat leader in the Israel Arab city of Nazareth, called this statistic the best in the world among Arab communities.

The highly trained nurses of the Tipat Halav system continue to visit the child at home after its first year and report developmental problems to cooperating teams of physicians, social workers and psychologists that work with the infant and maternal care station. Increasingly the nurses are involving fathers in the program and in some experimental locations giving birth control information. For both political and religious reasons it has been difficult for the nurses to provide family planning information in the past.

The Israelis try to achieve their goal of integration with increasing awareness of the need to preserve older traditions and cultural lifestyles. The Ministry of Education has respected the demands of the Arab community to maintain their cultural identity by setting up a completely separate educational system, which provides instruction in the Arab language and honors traditional celebrations of the Arab community. The school system integrates the two communities in the higher grade levels, offering voluntary instruction in both Hebrew and Arabic.

They have encouraged Oriental Jewish families to maintain their identity by settling in close-knit communities. The CLUW Seminar received a dramatic demonstration of this process at the Moshav* Zacaria where Kurdistani Jews from Iraq have built a successful cooperative village. We were greeted warmly by the women of the village, some of whom had worn their homeland costumes in our honor. They cooked a sumptuous meal and it all seemed very traditional until the speeches began.

Then it became clear that our visit was an

*Some 79 percent of men and 74 percent of women with 16 years or more of education are working, while 72 percent of men and only 20 percent of women with 8 years of education are working.

*A Moshav is a cooperative village in which each member family owns its own farm but produce is sold and supplies purchased through a central cooperative.

opportunity to tell the Na'amat leaders who accompanied us and a Knesset member who joined our group that infant care was needed at this Mochav so that the women would be able to work alongside their men in the fields.

When these women spoke to us it became clear they had learned the techniques of a modern political nation and would get what they needed to help them survive in this world while maintaining the traditions they wished to preserve.

WHAT WE SAW

No one can observe the child care worker in Israel without commenting on the obvious love and devotion that the teachers, baby nurses and others who gave care bestow on their charges. This notable warmth and good feeling that the adults show toward the children is not overprotective. The children work and play independently. We saw children working in small groups alone on art and science observation projects. We saw them learning handclap rhythms and number songs with teachers.

Posters with letters and posters with nutritional information, signs with botanical illustrations and animal illustrations decorated the play areas. There was a strong emphasis on hand made decorations and children's art was everywhere.

The small children seemed to have substantial time for free play both indoors and outdoors and worked with art materials in a way that a more unstructured program in the United States would expect children to work.

Parents were helped, rather than being helpers in the centers we observed. But we were told that role is changing. The new community centers involve parents in the educational process and kindergartens are requiring parents to participate one day a month for security duty and also as classroom volunteers if they so desire.

There was a strong emphasis on independent planning and action at the extended school in Lod where children were responsible for school grounds and maintenance.

There was giggling and joyous response to us as strangers in the centers we visited in Israel whether from very young children or older students. It was only in Lee Gat, the center attached to a dungaree factory and specifically for working parents at the factory, where we did not feel this sense of liveliness and fun.

It was clear that the Center was not built specifically for child care and space was being utilized to meet a powerful need. The children had kind attention, but the rooms were inadequate for the number of people.*

The Ajami day care center in Jaffa, in a mixed Arab and Jewish neighborhood, was an example of what we found most exciting about Israeli care.

Every room of the huge old house which was the center's quarters was percolating with activity. Some children were playing with blocks, some were painting and working with clay. There were children in the dress up area playing with dolls and household equipment, including a little boy ironing his clothing. There were children in the makeshift fort hiding and play-fighting. The children were divided into groups of 35 by age and then subdivided again into small groups of 15 children. Three adults were assigned to each of the larger groups.

The children seemed relaxed and unconcerned about our presence and although there was a language barrier we communicated, even played with them.

We learned that children received breakfast and lunch as part of the program. Classes began as early as 7 a.m. and parents or older siblings picked children up at 4 p.m. Since the school was located in a very poor neighborhood, the center gave priority to women with large families. Fees for the children were based on family income and many children were referred by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

THE ISRAELI MODEL

*Some CLUW Seminar observers felt the problem was that there were simply not enough adults present.

The CLUW Child Care Seminar was impressed with the unity of purpose and clarity of values that emerged from the Israeli system despite the wide variety of social agencies, private agencies, funding sources, public and private training programs for staff as well as different supervisory and inspection authorities.

The Israeli authorities and volunteer organizations agree on the purpose of their systems. They see child care as a key to reaching the family of the child and integrating the entire family into the Israeli lifestyle; then to expand the female workforce and encourage equality on the job; and finally to provide intensive early education for the child to compensate for skills not part of the family's traditions.

The Israeli child care system is organized on a "mixed plan" out of need; the United States system has developed in much the same way out of neglect. Israel's labor shortage dictates heavy reliance on volunteers. Our nation has many skilled and well-trained professionals in the field of early childhood development who are unemployed.

We can adopt from the Israeli model the concept that the state can provide financial payment for the children of all parents who register in an accredited community care facility regardless of income. We believe all child care should be free and universal. But if the Federal government were to pay only a partial share of the costs of maintaining a child in day care the cost to the parent should be based on income and family size and low-income families should be eligible for total support.

FRANCE

"Our mission is to develop an appetite for learning and then when the child is old enough to read and write he is ready and wants to . . ."

Teachers at Ecole Maternelle.

* * *

The French system of child care is based on the idea of community responsibility for the very young infant and child. Born out of a desire to stem the spread of contagion in 19th century Paris, it has undergone several transformations to accommodate the changing social policy of the nation.

The child care programs are concerned with the health and development of the child but are now also concerned with the early education and transition to elementary school.

The major systems of child care and early education are linked to the extensive infant and maternal health care programs. These programs are linked again to a national system of family allowances. The various payments for children are meant to encourage child birth while providing an income floor for families.

Women are entering the workforce in France at an ever-increasing rate. That fact is putting pressures on the existing system for children under age 3. Within the last decade there has been significant changes in the design of care facilities, the ratio of adults to children and the educational approach of the caretakers and teachers.

These changes toward greater freedom for children and some additional parental involvement in the system have been helped along by constant political pressures from the left to improve the quality of care in France, provide consistent quality around the country and rebuild those sections of the system which have deteriorated.

CRECHES AND NOURRICES

A French woman is entitled to maternity leave for fourteen weeks, six weeks before her child is born and eight weeks after.

The 50 percent of her average wage is provided through the National Insurance System and may be supplemented through contract negotiations.

Working women and children with special problems have priority at a system of neighborhood creches which care for infants from birth until two or three years of age. These creches charge fees on a sliding scale and are subsidized by state support. They are administered by the Ministry of Health which sets standards for space and facilities.

The child remains in the creche for the entire day in the care of trained baby nurses and helpers, some of whom receive in-service training and some of whom graduate from high school level courses on child development and infant care. Certified teachers are required if the creche includes children in the 2-3 age group.

The creche is closely linked, although not directly connected to, the infant maternal health care state in the community. It has access to the

pediatricians at the stations and the well-baby nurses. Periodic examinations are conducted of the entire infant population on a regular basis.

A complete record of the child's family and social history, experience with specialists, schools, and social welfare agencies is recorded in a "Carnet de Sante" (health record book) which the parent is expected to take to the child's elementary school at age six.

Family allowances for families with two or more children continue until the children are sixteen and beyond that if they are students or registered in an accredited apprenticeship program.

In cases where there is only one wage-earner in the family an additional allowance is granted for a single child and for subsequent children. A wife's income may be permitted if it remains below a certain level.

In order to receive these family allowances, the young child must be brought to the well-baby appointments. The health stations are administered for all parents and are generally used except in upper class neighborhoods, where, we were told, the parents use private physicians.

The neighborhood creche is called the "Creche Collective" to distinguish from a system of family day care homes called "Creche Familiale." There are some 70,000 places in these creches to serve a population of 2½ million infants under 3; 50,000 in the Creche Collective and 20,000 in the Creche Familiale. The French Ministry of Health estimates that another 20,000 children are enrolled in the creches operated by social agencies or church organizations and another 100,000 infants in the care of "la famille enlarge" – grandmothers, aunts and other relatives.

Parents who cannot find space in the system of neighborhood creches turn to a nourrice who provides care for their child in her own home. One estimate is that some 390,000 children under 3 are cared for in this manner.*

Women who wish to work as "nourrices-gardiennes" must register with the municipality which requires a physical examination. The woman is then listed on a public registry and parents may request the names of the caretakers from the local health services office. The parents can go directly to the caretaker from the local health services office. The parents can go directly to the caretaker and make a private arrangement in which fees, hours and conditions are determined without any regulation by a public official.

In a more closely monitored system, the Ministry of Health has set up a small number of day care homes under the direction of a neighborhood staff office. This office is called the Creche Familiale and supervises the nourrice working closely with the local infant and maternal health station.

There are seven Creches Familiales in Paris which supervise approximately 25 homes each. Members of the Child Care Seminar visited the staff and several of the homes in one such unit which supervised 27 nourrices with 53 children.

The Creche Familiale has strict requirements for its member nourrice. A woman may not have more than three children under six in her home, only one can be her own child. A single woman or a married woman who has never had a child may not become a nourrice. The officials fear that such a woman may develop a possessive attitude toward her charges causing conflict with the mother. The nourrice may be a grandmother up to the age of 60 or a single mother.

The nourrices register their preferred hours with the center which in turn matches up the mothers with the appropriate caretaker. A shortage of spaces may require the mother to use several caretakers during the week.

The waiting lists for the Creche Familiale and the Creche Collective are long. The director of the program we visited reported there were four Creche Collective in the area. There were also 300 registered nourrices but only 27 women actually supervised by the Creche Familiale. Some 700-800 children were in these various facilities with a

*The care may be for part of the day or in combination with other arrangements.

wait-list of 350.

Mothers pay the Creche Familiale on a sliding scale based on the number of children in care, joint income of the family, including family allowances. The nourrice is paid per child and must take the cost of the child's food out of the amount given her. She works about twelve hours a day.

The independent nourrice will charge more than the nourrice attached to the Creche Familiale. Creche Familiale rates range from $1.20 to $7.50 a day; independent family day care mothers charge $7 to $8 a day per child.

Caretakers still prefer working with the Creche Familiale for several reasons. The nourrice receives bed, bedding, strollers and toys for the children. They have the benefit of working with a professional team of social workers, nurses and physicians. They have access to regular meetings and training sessions. They are considered employees of the state and benefit from contributions to the pension and retirement system.

Supervision of the nourrice from the center is handled by a small staff which includes a director and another person trained in child care such as a nurse or midwife. The center also is staffed with a secretary and a part time pediatrician.

The supervisor visits the homes attached to the center once a week. The pediatrician is available at the center once a month and a psychologist and social worker take part in monthly meetings for the caretakers.

The Director of the Creche Familiale expressed great regret that this program had been given priority by the present government over the Creche Collective.

"That is not right," she said, "parents definitely prefer the Creche Collective and the Creche Familiale is their second choice. At the end of the list is the nourrice who is on her own."

The Director also said that the investment in home care is a false economy. "In the long run the costs are greater. For every toy you need in a Creche Collective, you need 15 here. Older children break a toy, you must buy a new one; the dog eats the doll and you have to start all over again."

Where there are no Creche Collective spaces available, middle class mothers often start cooperation creches or place their children in private, church or social agency operated creches. These are few in number and because they are not linked to the ecole maternelle are considered to be an inferior alternative. We were told there are virtually no creches organized for profit.

THE ECOLE MATERNELLE

While the care of infants and very small children is still the subject of some debate, there seems to be no debate about the value and system of infant schools called "ecole maternelle."

The ecoles maternelle are free public schools open to all children from the age of 2 (a child must be toilet trained) until the age of 6. This comprehensive, all-day system of eudcation was the most extensive, universal care we observed in any of the three nations we visited.

While many children cannot find space in the ecole maternelle at the age of two, they can be enrolled by three. The figures for 1977 indicate just how extensive the coverage is: At six enrollment is compulsory; some 748,000 of all five year olds are enrolled, or 98.6 percent; there are 733,000 four year olds in the program or 96.2 percent; there are 582,000 three year olds or 79 percent and 170,000 two year olds or 27 percent.

Madame Suzanne Pariant, Director of the Ecole Maternelle for the Ministry of Education, was our guide during our entire visit to Paris. She explained that in the last five years these nursery schools had undergone substantial changes in educational philosophy influenced by the work of psychologist Jean Piaget on the way children learn. As a result, classrooms for very young children were far less structured than they had been in the past. The children were working more and more on their own and the teacher was responsible for providing assistance, guidance and monitoring the educational progress of the child.

The children attend school from 9 to 12 or 8:30 to 11:30 in the morning and in the afternoon, from 2

to 5 or 1:30 to 4:30. School is open four and one-half days with Wednesday off and Saturday morning classes. These hours, including the days of vacation, provide substantial child care problems for working women.

Wednesday, the traditional mid-week school break, is so serious a problem that a non-profit league has been formed that works in concert with the municipalities to provide recreational and educational opportunities for children. We visited areas where these programs were in the process of being formed. Early morning hours and after school hours are monitored by "guardians" who provide supervised recreation or baby-sitting, usually at the school building, and are paid by the municipalities. In schools where there are canteens, the children stay for lunch. In schools without canteens, they are picked up by relatives or by a nourrice who takes care of them after school as well.

There are several holiday and vacation time programs for school age children and their families that are operated by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.

There are "open air centers" to which children are taken by bus outside of Paris. These seemed to be similar to day camp programs and parents pay according to income. There are also month-long sleepaway programs called "colonie vacances maternelle" and "maison familiare" which provide farm-type vacations for the entire family.

French creches and ecoles maternelle are called "opened" or "closed." This does not refer to the educational philosophy of the school but to the relationship of the parents to the school building itself. The closed school is literally closed to parents. They pick up the child at the door and only take part in the school program when there is a holiday or birthday party or some special community event. The open school is one in which parents have easy entry, pick up their children inside the school. The term implies a greater participation by parents in the school program, but we did not really see evidence of this.

Additionally, the Child Care Seminar observed a school without walls in a middle class suburb of Paris which served the age group usually found in the ecole maternelle but had been extended to include the elementary school children. This program was housed in a completely new school and we were told most new ecoles maternelle in France were following this design. "Although we cannot easily institute this method of teaching (self-motivated) in the older buildings, we are changing over to this method wherever the school building permits," Madame Parlant told us. We also learned that special in-service programs to help teachers who had been trained in traditional education methods had been instituted.

In addition to the changes in educational approach that have taken place, there has been a significant reduction in class size due to the pressure of the French teachers union. Before 1970, it was not uncommon for fifty children or more to be assigned to one teacher. The ratio now is 35 to one, still considered too high by the teachers union. The reduction was brought about by a strike of the ecole maternelle teachers. The teachers called on parents to enroll every eligible child in the program. The lists were full when the strike came. M. Paul Faure, Chairperson of the National Union of Teachers, which represents 85 percent of the public and private school instructors, told the Seminar the union would continue to fight for class size reductions, higher educational requirements as well as better upkeep of existing plants and construction of new schools to better accommodate the new philosophy of education.

Interestingly enough the French teachers reject the idea of teaching aides in the classroom, contending these will lower the quality of instruction. The present assistants hired by the municipalities — only one is required, sometimes there are two — have no duties in connection with the children. They are solely required to keep the school clean, sew and provide general maintenance.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare both view the schools as a means to

"Integrate the immigrant child as rapidly as possible into the French culture."

Although the school authorities are increasingly aware that mothers in homes where French is a second language are often left behind, they have not yet developed programs to teach children their home language. Children of immigrants as well as children with other social problems are given priority to register in the creches as well as the ecoles maternelle. Homes where mothers have large families or are ill also receive priority.

Children in the ecole maternelle are regularly examined by medical personnel and have access to child psychologists as well as speech therapists and other clinicians during the school day. The parent may elect whether the child shall see the specialist in his or her office or in the school. Most parents, we were told, elect to fit the visits into the regular school day.

The French school system is increasingly integrating handicapped children into the regular school program. Seminar observers noted a severly retarded child in a five/six year old class painting alongside the other children. The class of 35 was supervised by only one instructor and the handicapped child was receiving a great deal of help and support from the other children working along side him.

POLITICS AND CHILD CARE

Child care is a powerful political issue in France. The CLUW delegation met with two trade unions* in addition to the teacher union. New child care policies were being proposed by the government during our visit to Paris and were being hotly debated.

There are 8,300,000 working women in France or 38 percent of the total active female population. They are continuing to enter the workforce despite increasing unemployment which is affecting all sectors of the workforce.

Before 1968 the percentage of women entering the workforce between the ages of 24 and 34 was not increasing. But now it has risen sharply from 63 percent in 1968 to 67 percent in 1976. In the age group of 25 to 29 it has been even more dramatic – from 52 percent in 1968 to 63 percent in 1976. Statistics also show that fewer women are interrupting their worklife to have children. The unionists told us that more than 50 percent of the women in the region of Paris were working – most of them underemployed.

The French government has no official policy to encourage the entry of women into the workforce but pressure from the unions has forced it to respond to the needs of working women by strengthening existing programs and devising new ones, particularly in the area of child care and family allowances.

Both men and women unionists with whom we met were anxious to promote equality for women on the job. They pointed out that although equal pay for equal work was the law, there would never be equal access to the labor market without a guaranteed space for children in the creches and educational system.

Cultural values in France have also mitigated against female equality, we were told. Women are still expected to do all the housework and cook as well as care for the children. The potential for sharing these family duties are far off in the future.

At the same time there are powerful economic pressures on women to work to meet the growing cost of consumer goods, transportation and housing.

As in the United States, families are increasingly leaving Paris (one estimate was 50,000 a year) for outlying communities. The new suburban communities not only isolate women from their familiar neighborhoods and stores, but require the family to purchase a house on credit, appliances and an automobile. A second income is needed to pay for these credit purchases. The development of suburban life in France seemed similar to the development of suburban life in the United States.

In addition to the economic pressures and the

*Force Ouvriere and CFTD

political pressures on the government, there have been increasing efforts by coalitions of parents, teachers and maternal care workers to organize lobbying groups to push for smaller classes in the ecoles maternelle, more community creche spaces and additional staff training for child care workers.

WHAT WE SAW

The CLUW Child Care Seminar visited homes in which nourrices cared for infants under the direction of the Creche Familiate as well as Creche Collective attached to the workplace in a pilot program operated for the children of parents working for the Ministry of Labor.

The group care centers were very well equipped with materials, toys and furniture and provided space both indoors and outdoors for activity by very young children. We asked whether this kind of facility was common in all creches and were told that there is a great variety of physical facilities – some in old houses and some in new centers, such as the ones we visited. Materials, supplies and staffing were the same since these were provided by the municipality but we would find great variety in the physical plant itself.

In one open creche in Paris adjoining an infant and maternal care station, there were many rooms decorated with bright colored textiles and painted in warm colors. In one room there were eight cribs with four infants in them and two staffs, both baby nurses. The creche served children from two months to two years.

The creche is moving away from same age groupings and like Sweden is encouraging sibling groupings. There was music being played on a record player, many toys on the floor for children of seven and eight months of age to examine and chew.

One could see the origins of the creche in the health care system. The rooms were immaculately clean and drops of blood, mud and normal childhood debris seemed to disappear as soon as they were sighted. The entire creche seemed to sparkle as did the ecole maternelle we visited, yet the children appeared to be having a good time and enjoying free use of the toys and craft materials.*

The director of this creche told us it cost $14.50 a day to maintain a child in a community creche. Parents pay up to $7.50 according to their income. The cost of community creches are shared 40 percent from the Ministry of Health, 40 percent from the parents or supplementary payments and 20 percent by the municipalities.

The ecole maternelle provide a more intensive educational program with many choices for children to select. Active play included dance movements and outdoor games. There was heavy emphasis on craft and art material as well as books, toys and musical instruments in every room regardless of the age group.

In one room where five and six year olds were preparing to make the transition to primary school, a male teacher stood in the middle of a large, packed classroom directing the very intensely involved children in well-planned activities. He called his method "learning through playing."

The children had selected weaving and textiles as an interest area. He told us: "One child will learn math by creating a jacquard pattern and weaving its design. Other children will paint designs for cloth, others are learning about the weaving techniques of primative people in Africa and the Americas. Together we have visited a textile factory and observed commercial weaving."

There has been a conscious de-emphasis on teaching reading and writing to children younger than five or six years of age. At that age the children develop a series of symbols for words such as a picture of a mouth for the word "eating." Eventually, we were told, the pictures were to become increasingly abstract until they were replaced by the word itself.

Most impressive was the art work and pottery

*In fact members of the group wistfully concluded that French children were either born cleaner or raised differently than their U.S. counterparts.

made by the children in various ecoles maternelle. The CLUW Seminar's Child Care Specialist commented on the sophisticated quality of the form, color and style of the paintings of the very young children. We were first told: "Well, all Frenchmen are born painters." In further discussion we learned that the children themselves discuss and evaluate the paintings of their classmates and are encouraged to develop some standards of critical judgment.

THE FRENCH MODEL

The French child care system is one of the best kept secrets in the world. It was not uncommon for the members of the group to be asked: "Why are you going to France?" before we left on the study trip.

Yet French parents have access to the child care system that provides the greatest number of spaces for the greatest number of children – even very young children.

The United States will have to observe the system very closely as it debates how our own system of child care will be organized.

The French provide universal admittance to their program by making it part of the school system. They also provide universal teacher training and standardization of program as well as materials.

It is clear the system has undergone substantial changes in directions in recent years. We used to call these ecoles maternelle "children's prisons," said one director. There was no such prison in the schools we observed.

Placing very young children in a school situation places stresses on both faculty and facilities that indicate they may best be served in schools specially built for this age group.

Linking the education of these young children to the infant and maternal care system is an essential element of the French system. And both the creches and schools have developed from a national family policy which the U.S. has yet to institute.

The increasing number of nourrices, both supervised and unsupervised, point a way that the United States might go if unplanned, but subsidized child care is permitted. We should take particular note of the statements made by workers in the system, that community care was preferable to supervised home care and that supervised home care was preferable to unsupervised home care.

We could also note from the French model that the French look on these nursery schools as opportunities for childhood education rather than institutional warehousing and as a result have a high level of acceptance in the general population.

Each morning, all over the United States, mothers and fathers wake up hoping their makeshift arrangements for child care will work. They pray that their child will stay well so he or she can go to school. They pray the baoysitter will not catch the flu so that she can come to their home or receive their child in hers. They curse the snow . . . because that means school might be closed. They hope the recreation program will be adequately supervised to protect their child after school.

Some hang a key around a daughter's neck and tell her to come home "right after school – no messing around." They tell their sons to do his homework and not play in anyone's house without an adult present. Their child care arrangements are a combination of chance taking and breath holding. It takes its toll of the parent and the child.

Take a look at the young mothers next time you ride a bus early in the morning. They are up at five a.m. and traveling across town at six to take their sleepy child to a baby sitter's house. They reboard another bus, travel to their job and repeat the process at night. They are tired, their child is cranky and they are often short tempered with their babies. Their children become a cross to bear rather than a joy to savour.

This is the reality of child care in the United States. When President Nixon vetoed comprehensive child care legislation he raised the spectre of government bureaucracy undermining the American family. The American family they described, however, is a conservative myth. That family guided by traditional values with its members serving traditional roles is shattered by our experiences and statistics.

AMERICAN FAMILY FACTS

In the real American family, divorce leaves many children in single parent homes headed by women. Almost 40 percent of American marriages end in divorce. Only 44 percent of the wives with children are awarded child support and only 47 percent of these collect child support payments regularly.

The facts are that in the United States women have been entering the work force at an ever-increasing rate over the past 25 years. In 1975, 46 percent of all women age 16 and over were working, a 34 percent increase since 1950. Of more than one-half of all women in the "active" age group – 25-54 years – some 55 percent are working.

The facts: Some 7.2 million families are headed by women – more than one family in ten. These families are likely to be poor, their mother less well-educated, minority and urban.

More married women are entering the workforce each year and staying there, taking less and less time for child bearing and child raising. While the difference between the number of years a woman works and the number of years a man works is still significant, it is declining.

At the beginning of the century a woman had an average worklife expectancy of 6.3 years as opposed to men's worklife expectancy of 32.1 years. In 1950, woman could expect to work an average of 15.1 years and men 41.5 years. But by 1960 woman's worklife expectancy had climbed to 20.1 years and men's had declined to 41.1 years. By 1970 women could expect to work an average of 22.0 years and men 40.1 years. Labor Department experts anticipate that this reduction in the gap between men's and women's working life will continue unless there is an upsurge in the unemployment rate.*

Almost 3/5 of all women workers – 58 percent – are married and living with their husbands. Married women who work note the family is dependent on them to provide private housing, independent transportation, appliances and other amenities which we call "the American way of life." Statistics indicate the woman's job may be the difference between working class respectability and poverty. The Women's Bureau notes that the financial contributions of working wives raise family income above the poverty income level or from low to middle income. When both parents were present in a family and both worked, only 4 percent had incomes below $5,000. But when the wife didn't work, 13 percent of these families earned less than $5,000.

There are three times more women with children under 18 presently working than there were in 1950. About 14.1 million mothers with children work and about 6.1 million of these had children under six years of age.

Five million American children live in homes headed by women, 1.1 million of these children are under the age of six. These are women who either must work to support their families or collect welfare benefits.

FAMILY POLICY

Pick up a newspaper in France or in Israel or in Sweden and you will find that "Family Policy" questions are being debated by the government. The Minister of Health and Social Welfare is announcing changes or additions in the Family Policy and these will cover a wide range of programs:

- It will definitely cover subsidies to provide an income floor for all families with children.
- It will definitely cover maternal and child health care.
- It will cover child care services and facilities.
- It may cover labor market policies as related to the family.
- It may cover housing.
- It may cover education and recreation.

We have visited countries that have a cohesive view of public services as they affect the family unit. These services do not undermine the family's traditional role as teacher of moral values, it makes it possible for parents to carry out that role.

These policies seem firmly rooted in the world as it really is. They take cognizance of the fact that it costs money to raise children, that parents work, that divorce occurs, that children get sick, that housing deteriorates and that education gets increasingly expensive.

OBSERVATIONS

This report has been entitled "A Commitment to Children" because the participants in this study have concluded that the child care programs in each of the nations we visited were primarily rooted in community concern for the physical, social and developmental needs of children. We also observed that these programs aim at strengthening family life by providing a measure of security and stability.

We believe a comprehensive child care program in the United States should also flow from a national policy on children and families that include a maternal and infant health plan; a basic standard of housing for families, a floor on family income and full employment.

The need for out-of-home care for children is

*The Earnings Gap Between Men and Women, U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, 1976.

related to two developments in all three countries. In each nation, as in the United States, there has been a significant increase in the number of working mothers with young children. Comprehensive child care legislation must provide for the needs of these workers and recognize the difference in school schedules and work schedules by supporting programs for after-school recreation, vacations and holidays.

All three nations endorse the value of early childhood education. We believe all children should have access to pre-school education, not simply custodial care.

In each nation we visited, priority was given to working parents, single parents and to families of children with special needs, including handicapped children.

Ideally we endorse the concept of free and universal child care. We note that government payments in each nation underwrite at least the base cost for child care which may cover construction and maintenance of physical facilities and sometime teacher or other staff salaries. Where there is a fee, the parent pays only a portion of the cost of maintaining the child in care and that is based on a sliding scale formula determined by income and size of family.

In Israel, the sliding scale fees are based only on the income of the mother. We believe such a principle supports the right of women who want to work to do so. It does not dilute the financial value of the woman's job to her family.

In no country is proprietary care – day care for profit – encouraged or subsidized. We believe only non-profit providers should receive government support.

The special consideration given to physically and emotionally handicapped children in each country implies the need to provide more trained personnel to work with these children and in-service training for present staff.

We observed that programs in all countries are designed to respect the language, cultural and ethnic differences of diverse populations.

Child care programs are also open to all children regardless of economic status and an effort is made to locate facilities so as to minimize economic, racial and cultural segregation.

Parents in each of the countries prefer day care facilities located close to their homes rather than to their places of work and we believe priority should be given to providing care in neighborhoods.

Family day care homes in France and Sweden seem to be a political expedient to provide low-cost spaces to meet a high demand. As working women we are concerned that this care provides only baby-sitting services for the child and depends on the maintenance of a low-paid, poorly trained group of women workers. If family day care continues to be subsidized in this country it must be closely supervised and provide strict program and safety standards.

In each country the need for child care spaces has consistently exceeded the supply. All day care for pre-schoolers and after-school care for older children are powerful political issues. Working women through their unions are playing an active role in demanding improved facilities and more spaces. In Sweden all concerned citizens are discussing the idea of a shorter work day and the elimination of night shift work for parents so that there can be "more time for children."

The CLUW Child Care Seminar believes child care must become a priority issue in this nation soon. We have seen programs that work and we have seen what a national commitment to children can accomplish. Our nation has the resources and ingenuity to do the same.